



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

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MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD ANNOUNCES MAJOR BOARD REFORM OVERHAUL **\$2.75 Million Cut to Board Budget**

(MILWAUKEE) – The Milwaukee County Board’s budget will be cut by 50 percent under a bold new set of initiatives proposed before an “Our Milwaukee County” listening session Thursday night.

The major initiative includes but is not limited to government streamlining, mandatory training for County Supervisors to clarify roles and responsibilities in County governance.

“This comprehensive package is the kind of bold reform our constituents asked for during the ‘OUR Milwaukee County’ sessions and various town hall meetings across the County,” said Board Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic. “We’ve had listening sessions in more than half of the County, and Milwaukee County residents want to see reform done locally, not imposed on the County by the state Legislature. This is the one of the most significant and dramatic overhauls of Milwaukee County government in history, and this is what our constituents have demanded.

“We listened to everyone – county residents, state legislators and local officials – to create realistic Board reform. This package reflects that. It’s been said that we would never reform ourselves, that we would never cut our own salaries, and that we would never cut our budget. But this package demonstrates clearly that not only have we listened, we’ve acted with a commitment to true, realistic, locally generated reform.”

Dimitrijevic said that with seven new Board members “it is a new day for County government.”

“These reforms are proof that this is a new Board with a new outlook on reform,” she said. “We have a new chair, and seven of the 18 members of the Board are new. Everyone on the Board – new members and long-time Supervisors – is committed to locally generated change.”

Supervisors’ pay will be cut by 20 percent under the proposal, and the board budget would be cut \$2.75 million, which could be used for transit, parks, mental health and other County services.

The reforms mean that beginning in 2016 supervisors pay would be reduced to about \$40,000, and that the Chairperson’s salary would be less than that of the Waukesha County Board chairperson.

A majority of people who spoke at the “OUR Milwaukee County” sessions said they favored reform, but not reform imposed on the County Board by the state Legislature, she said. Assembly Bill 85 would reduce the Board’s budget to .4 percent of the County tax levy while cutting Board staff by about 70 percent. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Joe Sanfelippo, would strip the Board’s ability to govern effectively, Dimitrijevic said.

“The fact is, the County Board matters, and our constituents care deeply about it,” she said. “They want to be part of the reform process that is taking place on County governance.

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“This reform package is real reform generated locally, and we believe our constituents will agree that this package is far preferable to one imposed by the state. There is more than one way to reform, and the most successful way is locally.”

Among other reforms announced were:

- Definition and clarification of roles and responsibilities of both the Board and the County Executive, which agree the Board is a policy-making body and the County Executive is manager of day-to-day operations, with mandatory training for supervisors.
- Creation of an independent Office of Intergovernmental Relations, which will report to both the County Executive and the County Board Chair.
- Changes to contracting policy.
- Requirement of an efficiency audit for all levels of County government and use of a mediator to enforce those efficiencies. Recommendations for additional efficiency measures in governance and operations. Follow-through on the efficiency audit for additional governance measures and County-wide operational efficiency measures.
- Transfer of the Community Development Business Partners department from the Board to the independent office of the County Comptroller.
- There would be no future pension benefit provided to Supervisors unless they choose to pay the full-cost beginning with the 2016 term

“Everything is on the table,” Dimitrijevic said. “We have said that this new board is committed to reform, and we have presented a bold new look for the County Board. We believe this is what the people of Milwaukee County want – change on a local, not state, level.

“This is the beginning of a new chapter in County governance. The people of Milwaukee County spoke, and we listened.”

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